

# **CITY OF SEABROOK TRAVEL REGULATIONS AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

## **POLICY**

Payment of travel expenses are intended to be and shall be solely for travel performed by employees of the City on "Official City Business". Official City business is defined as that which is necessary and proper and has been approved by the City Manager or his/her designee. A detail of expenses must be submitted prior to reimbursement to the employee.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **City Vehicle**

City vehicles should be used whenever possible. Gasoline, parking and tolls will be reimbursed by the City. Receipts for all reimbursement requests must be submitted with the Travel Expense Report.

#### **Personal Vehicle**

The rate of reimbursement for employees utilizing their personally owned vehicle shall be the most recent published Internal Revenue Service allowance on the basis of the shortest practical route between points. Gasoline, parking and tolls will be reimbursed by the City. Receipts for all reimbursement requests must be submitted with the Travel Expense Report.

Employees receiving a car allowance will be reimbursed for any mileage over 100 mile radius of the City.

When authorized, the City will pay auto rental charges for an employee in travel status. Unless otherwise authorized, the rental car shall be of the most economical variety. Purchased gas and oil used in rental cars shall normally be reimbursed provided receipts are submitted. Several rental agencies should be contacted to obtain the most economical rate.

#### **Air Travel**

All airline tickets must be booked at the lowest available airfare in economy or coach class. Flight arrangements should be made at least twenty-one (21) days in advance to obtain the lowest possible airfares. The Department Director should approve airfare for flights booked less than twenty-one (21) days in advance or greater than \$350 prior to making the reservation.

Airline tickets should be purchased using a City credit card whenever possible. If a personal credit card is used to purchase an airline ticket, this expense will be reimbursed after the trip is completed and upon receipt of proper documentation by the City.

### **Taxis and Other Local Transportation**

The cost of taxis to and from places of business, hotels and airports in connection with business activities will be reimbursed by the City upon submission of receipts.

### **PER DIEM ALLOWANCE**

Per Diem allowance shall be provided to accommodate meals, tips and incidentals. Per Diem shall be provided consistent with the most current allowances as set by law. Access the U.S. General Services Administration website, [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov) and click on the Per Diem Rate Lookup under the Travel Tab.

Meals provided in the registration or by an event or other agency, should be deducted from the per diem reimbursement allowance (except for medical, dietary or religious reasons as outlined in the GSA regulations). Please refer to the Meals & Incidental (M&IE) Breakdown at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov).

Per Diem allowance shall be prorated for the day of departure and the day of return according to GSA guidelines, currently 75% for each of the two traveling days.

Meals for training or during travel that does not include an overnight stay are not reimbursable.

### **LODGING**

Expenses for lodging must be supported by receipt and will be reimbursed to the employee on actual cost basis for reasonable accommodations. No personal phone calls or meals are to be included, as this is considered covered under the per diem. If you charge meals to your hotel bill, you must deduct from your per diem allowance based on the actual cost of the meal.

## **REQUEST AND REPORTING PROCEDURES**

### **TRAVEL ADVANCES**

Requests shall be submitted to the Finance Department at least ten (10) days prior to date of training, completed with the amount of the request, purpose, nature, location, place of lodging, travel dates and supporting documentation.

Approval – The request must be signed by the traveler and submitted to the Department Head. The Department Head will sign the request indicating approval and availability of funds. The approved travel advance request forms are then forwarded to the Finance Department.

Check Processing – Upon receipt of the approved advance request, the Finance Department will prepare the advance check payable to the traveler. The traveler is personally responsible for the advanced amount until an approved expense report is processed and the difference is refunded or until the full amount is refunded. *The City may deduct any delinquent advance amounts from an employee's payroll check.*

## **TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORTS**

Reports shall be completed within ten (10) days of return by the traveler, with supporting documentation. The expense report shall have attached receipts, hotel bills, etc. sufficient to review the traveler's expenses for compliance with this policy.

The Expense Report form shall be completed and signed by the traveler, reviewed, approved and signed by the Department Head and then submitted to the Finance Department for audit.

The Finance Department shall review the expense report for compliance with this policy and the Finance Director or their designee shall sign the travel expense report or return for further information. After a satisfactory review the Finance Officer shall relieve the traveler of the advanced amount and/or reimburse the traveler for expenses in excess of the advance.

Expense reports and supporting documentation are subject to the Texas Public Information Act and may be disclosed to the public upon submission of an Open Records request.

## **INELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

The following items will not be considered for payment or reimbursement by the City:

- Entertainment including sporting events, theater, in-room movies, etc.
- Alcoholic beverages of any type
- Other items not pertaining to City business
- Spouse's or any other traveling companion's expenses
- Health clubs and spas
- Personal articles (i.e. toiletries, magazines, etc.)
- Business and personal calls from hotels
- Calls to 900 numbers
- Dry cleaning or laundry
- Fines
- Costs resulting from failure to cancel transportation or hotel reservations

The above items are specifically excluded, but the list is not to be considered all inclusive.